
Name of Organization: West Creek Preservation Committee

Type of Organization: Other

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Grants Committee
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Project Title: West Creek Valley Outreach Programs

Project Category: Habitat (Ecological) Protection and Rest

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 21,682 **Project Duration:** 1.5 Years

Abstract:

West Creek is a tributary of approximately eight miles in length that drains into the Cuyahoga River. The West Creek watershed drains approximately 20 square miles and is inhabited by approximately 90,000 people. Water quality issues affecting the watershed have a direct impact on the Great Lakes Basin. Public outreach programs are needed to educate and involve the community to improve the water quality, preserve and restore natural habitats, and address erosion, sewage and drainage concerns. Past efforts to do this have been demonstrably successful through community clean-up days, hiking programs, educational literature and speaker programs.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ohio

Lakes:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

Geographic Initiatives:

<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair
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Primary Affected Area of Concern: Cuyahoga River, OH

Other Affected Areas of Concern:

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

The West Creek watershed is one of the largest watersheds in Cuyahoga County draining into the Cuyahoga River from the west. The watershed is densely developed, and issues such as point and non-point source pollution, landfill debris, erosion, and loss of natural buffers are impacting the water quality of West Creek and therefore the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie. In terms of the natural environment, the West Creek Valley is one of the largest natural areas and river corridors in Cuyahoga County without a protected status. An aggressive campaign to rediscover West Creek is essential to educate community residents to prevent further loss of water quality, encourage landowner stewardship, and generate support for long-term protection of the remaining significant green space in the watershed.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The community will participate in outreach programs such as "Clean Up West Creek" and "Hike West Creek" in organized efforts to clean creek debris, provide awareness to water quality issues, and generate broad-based community support for the West Creek Preserve and Greenway project. The clean-up programs are expected to result in the removal of several tons of debris from the creek area, addressing the non-point source pollution. Publications and exhibits will be used to broadly reach community residents. An important part of these outreach efforts will be to build partnerships between community residents, local governments, and other organizations to achieve stewardship goals.

This project is proposed in conjunction with a comprehensive plan under development by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, identified as The West Creek Valley Management Plan. The plan will study the West Creek watershed area and will cover water quality issues, habitat protection, and recreational use.

For the past three years, there has been collaborated effort to establish a natural park on the largest section of open space along West Creek, a 400-acre area in Parma, Ohio. The effort includes developing greenway trail connections from the Parma park, now known as the West Creek Preserve, to other area destinations, especially the Towpath Trail in the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor. The potential greenway route along the creek will protect an extended natural stream buffer.

Project Milestones:**Dates:**

Project Start - Finalize Plans/Contracts	11/2000
Print Exhibits & Literature	01/2001
Hiking & CleanUp Program Promotion	01/2001
Hiking & CleanUp Program Promotion	04/2001
Spring Community CleanUp	04/2001
Hiking & CleanUp Program Promotion	07/2001
Fall Community CleanUp	10/2001
Document Outcome - Project End	01/2002

☐ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

The outreach programs, such as "Clean Up West Creek" and "Hike West Creek," will be developed with the intent to urge community involvement. Other educational information will be communicated to residents, government and civic organization through presentations and mailings. The information will address plans to improve the water quality by means of non-point source pollution control and natural habitat protection.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	2,800	2,800
Fringe:	0	0
Travel:	62	62
Equipment:	580	120
Supplies:	4,150	1,000
Contracts:	14,090	1,760
Construction:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Total Direct Costs:	21,682	5,742
Indirect Costs:	0	0
Total:	21,682	5,742
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

\$30,000 2000 Ohio Coastal Management Assistance Grant-West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$10,000 2000 George Gund Foundation Grant - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 2,500 2000 Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners-West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 2,500 2000 Village of Brooklyn Heights - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 2,500 2000 City of Independence - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 2,500 2000 City of Parma - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 2,500 2000 City of Seven Hills - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$10,500 2000 Cleveland Foundation - West Creek Valley Management Plan
\$ 6,000 1999 George Gund Foundation - Site Specific Study/Public Education
\$ 2,000 1999 Great Lakes Aquatic Habita Fund Special Opportunity Grant- Public Education
\$ 4,000 1998 Gund Foundation Grant - Public Education
\$ 7,500 1998 Lake Erie Protection Grant - Public Education

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

The interest in active preservation of the West Creek Valley has gained momentum in the Parma, Seven Hills, Brooklyn Heights, and Independence communities over the past three years. This common interest fostered the formation of the West Creek Preservation Committee in 1997. The organization has attained registered status under code 501(c)(3) of Ohio Canal Corridor. It remains a volunteer organization and has grown to almost five hundred members.

The approach of the organization has been to work with city governments and other agencies to gain cooperation in the development of the West Creek Preserve and Greenway. A collaborative effort is underway for the development of the 'West Creek Valley Management Plan' by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to inventory resources and recommend implementation steps for watershed protection and outdoor recreation.

West Creek Preservation Committee has received technical assistance and other support from the National Park Service's office of River, Trails and Conservation Assistance as well as Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area staff, Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, and Cuyahoga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Milestones towards reached toward the creation of the West Creek Preserve and Greenway include resolutions of support for the concept by the Cities of Parma, Seven Hills, and Brooklyn Heights. The City of Parma has a park advisory board to assist with park development on the 160 acres of city-owned land along West Creek. The advisory board was convened after Parma voter passed an issue in November of 1998, designating these 160 acres as parkland. The City of Seven Hills has formed a task force to work on developing a connecting greenway trail through an area of historic sandstone quarries in that city. The Cities of Brooklyn Heights and Independence are also forming task force groups to identify potential greenway connections.